overall shortfall in the bulk availability of LPG, apart from operational and transportation problems. With the measures already taken, the situation has since normalised. The situation is being monitored to ensure regular supplies to the consumers.

Shortage of cooking gas in Indore

1619. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the consumers of Indore are facing acute shortage of cooking gas due to less number of gas agencies leading to bottlenecks in the distribution system;

(b) if so, what remedial steps are being taken in this regard;

(c) whether there are plans to increase the gas supply and also the number of gas agencies; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what is the position in regard to the three agencies for which applications were invited long back and which were meant to be awarded to the members of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) No, Sir. Presently refill supplies to Indore market are reported to be normal;

(b) Does not arise;

(c) Yes, Sir. Three additional distributorships have been planned for Indore city which are at various stages of processing;

(d) The status of the three distributorships is as follows:

Category	Oil Cos	Status
(i) SC	IOC	To be advertised
(ii) PH	BPC	Applications forwarded to OSB (W)
(iii) OP	HPC	LOI issued on 27-9-1989.

NOTE:

SC—Scheduled Caste
PH—Physically Handicapped
OP—open

Transportation of Natural Gas from Western Fields to Southern Region

1620. SHRI T. R. BALU:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gas Authority of India Limited has been asked to examine the feasibility of transportation of natural gas from western fields to the Southern Region; and

(b) if so, what is the progress made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY): (a) and (b) An Inter-Ministerial Committee is being appointed to examine the various issues pertaining to the establishment of a Southern Gas Grid.

Declaring Punjab as Industrially Backward State

1621. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state: